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## THE CHURCHES OF FRANCE AND THEIR SEPARATION FROM THE STATE

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It is a matter of common knowledge that during the last ten years the Churches of all denominations in France have been passing through a profound crisis. Such convulsions are not inevitably the death-agony of religion. Only the world's contempt or the world's forgetfulness could kill the Christian faith; but it is apt to be quickened rather than deadened by struggles for its life. Yet religion has a more subtle danger to encounter than the opposition of public authorities however violent. It is not impossible for the Church to be unconsciously seduced into imitation of her adversaries. She may come to make use of their methods. She may gradually slip downwards to the level of their spirit. So that, while prophesying among men as if she were the voice of God, her actions may be indistinguishable from those of a godless world. That is the danger. It is threatening the Church at this moment, and is more or less a menace to religion, everywhere and always.

### PART FIRST: THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Strange as it is, and unremarked as the fact may have been, the years which followed the disastrous war of 1870 saw the Catholics becoming or remaining masters of France. From the President of the Republic to the humblest functionary of the State, from the top to the bottom of all officialdom, military as well as civil, Cath-

olics held the ground, and Catholicism was deferred to. How is it that in the few years which have elapsed since, they have fallen so low and are now reduced to short commons? To begin with, one cannot help seeing that during their more prosperous period Catholics were malcontents. Religious enthusiasm was wanting. Had this been otherwise, if as a body they could have risen to the spiritual nobility of a de Mun, whose heart drew an uplift and a baptism from the terrible defeat he witnessed on the field of battle, so as to hear in it but a summons to a splendid moral resistance, how glorious had been the prospect to Catholic ambitions! But alas! let there but arise to agitate France a self-seeking, mischief-making, and bungling General Boulanger, and forthwith the whole Catholic body wheels after him, and follows his blundering lead. Or again, let a new and grave crisis arrive, as was the Dreyfus affair, pushing home to the individual conscience problems on whose just settlement the very foundations of society rested, then what happened? This happened: The Catholics ranged themselves on the side of order, it is true; but at the same time identified their party foolishly with the side of moral confusion. Nevertheless, when in 1901 Waldeck-Rousseau, then the President of the Council, carried a law through the Assembly against the teaching and trading Congregations, it is not necessary to believe that he did so with the idea of retaliation. He was shocked at the wide gulf between the Catholic and lay mind. He desired that the State should be in a position to exercise permanent regular control over the instruction given to young Catholics. Standing up against the Congregations encroachment has been carried on in France many times in its past history. Royalty has from time to time set an example of resistance. The secular clergy themselves have often been among the foremost to call a halt. But under Waldeck-Rousseau the temper of the times was

changed, so that what had been hitherto on the side of the laity nothing more than a defensive wall against the encroachment of the Congregations was converted into a policy of aggressive attack. Combes, a former Seminarist, having succeeded Waldeck-Rousseau as President of the Council, took advantage of the covenant of lay resistance against the Church power which had put his predecessor in the chair, and proceeded to open battle not only with Catholicism, but against the very idea of religion. His manner of dealing with the issue was more than coarse. No citizen with any feeling for liberty and justice could approve such conduct unreservedly. No man of religious ideals could fail to be disgusted at the outrageous harshness and frequent displays of passionate hostility which marked the administration's methods. While all this is true, however, there must be an explanation for the success of the government's vigorous policy, for the majority which steadily sustained it, and for the futile barrenness of the opposition it has met with. The explanation in a word is this. The bulk of the French nation were frightened. They were frightened both by the Catholics' openly defiant reactionary temper, and even more by their supposed plottings and conspiracies. They were eager to be delivered from it all. The explanations of the clericals are often shallow. Their favorite phrase is "the influence of Jewish gold." But, thank God, great events in human history are derived from deeper causes. As is the case in the strifes of nations, so has it been here. The French Church and the French State went to war with one another simply because one, or rather both, of the parties desired there should be war. At first the government wanted it. After a while, the civil authorities, out of breath, were more anxious to compromise than not. By this time however, Rome had become exasperated, and was unwilling to give way. Combes picked a quarrel with the

Pope, because his Holiness protested against the visit of the French President, M. Loubet, to the Italian Court, and added fuel to the fire by mixing himself up at the same time with the ecclesiastical relations of certain bishops, Monsignors Geay and le Nordez, who at that particular moment were on bad terms both with the inhabitants of their respective dioceses and also with the Pope himself. What the rights of the bishops' case were, it is not important for us to know. One thing is certain, the French government in June, 1904, took advantage of the opportunity to break off diplomatic relations with the Vatican and recall its ambassador. It is hinted in some quarters that a movement is beginning to show itself just now to resume official relations. So far, however, France continues, as it has been for the past nine years, without an ambassador at the Vatican. The separation of the Churches from the State was definitely voted by the Chambers in the following year. And thus, though not without some opposition, was at last accomplished a reform, which had had a place upon the programme of advanced republicans for more than half a century. A number of different bills had been offered upon the subject, only to be immediately thrown out, as being frankly hostile to religion itself as well as to the Catholic Church. The measure brought in by M. Briand, however, a member of the Cabinet, met a better fate. The bill he introduced was not benevolent to the Churches, since it ruled out from State remuneration all religious officials alike. But under the new name of "worship associations" he permitted the Church organizations to continue, and even to progress morally, under strict financial limitations. Needless to say, a law which was so novel an experiment, and which affected the interests of the people so deeply, would need to be retouched at many points, according as experience of its results should gradually point out. With a little tact and patience the

Catholics might have parried direct injury to religion and have prepared to adapt themselves to the new situation. But Rome does not believe in evolution nor officially, in adaptation. Strange as it may seem, at the time when the bill was introduced no one expected that it would pass. Surely something out of the ordinary would happen to prevent it. The most amazed man, when the law was actually voted, was the head of the Department of Religion, M. Dumay (Ministry of Home Affairs), against whom it has since been proved that he actually conspired with the Clericals to prevent the bill's passage. Instead of clinging to a system which was tottering to its downfall, the Catholics might, as we said, have made prudent preparations for the new order. Such a policy however would have required some active co-operation, however discreet, with the French government; and this, the Vatican—I do not say the Catholics—repeatedly and absolutely refused to allow.

The question arises, what might have been the effect of the new law upon the life of the Catholic Church? From the moral point of view, the papal authority was strengthened. Formerly two powers, the Roman hierarchy and the French government, co-operated together in directing the affairs of the Churches. Now there is but one administrator. The government's administration is effaced. Rome, appointing her bishops without an intermediary, no longer needs to have any understanding as to the matter with the State. So much the better then for the Pope; he has recovered his old exclusive rights, and is delivered from State interference.

On the other hand, the Catholic Church loses a large amount of money. The suppressed religious budget is some thirty-five millions of francs. Even here, however, it might have got some advantage. The effect upon the people of being compelled to raise so large a sum for the

very subsistence of religion may have had some influence in attaching them to their Churches. What is more serious is the loss of the free use of their vicarages, of the archbishop's palaces, and of the seminary buildings. It was provided that they should belong to the State or to the Commune after some few years. The time of grace originally allowed was too short; but the refusal to accept the law reduced it to a single year. The law, moreover, was too harsh in its manner of dealing with the compensation of the clergy. Only those who were forty-five years old and had been recipients of State remuneration for not less than twenty years, could receive a life-pension. Others who could not come up to these conditions—men in active duty—saw their emoluments gradually fall to nothing in the course of four years. Surely there ought to have been shown some degree of respectful and moderate treatment while the law was taking these men's living from them, instead of the sudden harshness which was actually employed. One of the bishops saw himself brought in a year's time nearly to the point of actual starvation.

While it cannot be denied that the material losses, and by natural consequence the injury to its moral influence, which the Church in France has sustained, have been very great, on the other hand it must likewise be recognized that if she had submitted to the law she would have succeeded in preserving for herself no small measure of her enormous wealth. The truth deserves to be openly proclaimed that the government had no intention of seizing the Church's patrimony. This amounted to three hundred and fifty-one millions of francs, the property of the parishes, of the Cathedrals, of the archdioceses, or to speak more strictly, of the religious edifices, and their "chapters" or trustees. The law in its fourth Article contemplated the transference of the respective endowments to the new religious "Associations"; while the

eighth Article made the Council of State responsible for the equitable carrying out of this arrangement. While there was thus needed some delicacy of administration, yet the law itself was not impossible; neither was it of such a nature as to diminish popular respect for religion or its institutions. Why then has the Church become so transformed as it now is? Why is it that at the present time her aspect is one of such disorganization and disorder as to justify a member of the government in declaring, from the Senatorial Tribune, in the year 1908, that the French Republic had no interest in and did not concern itself with the present anarchical condition of the Catholic religion? "*Le gouvernement de la République n'avait pas intérêt à cet état anarchique de la religion Catholique.*" We propose to find the answer to this question by examining the events with some care, in the order of their sequence.

Once the law of Separation was passed, to their amazement, in December, 1905, there was but one thing for the Catholics to do, namely to await the Pope's official mandate. During the following February this appeared in the Encyclical, "*Vehementer nos.*" It condemned severely the new order of things, especially on these two grounds: first, the danger of the predominance of the laity; secondly, the impossibility of trusting the Council of State (the Supreme Court) with the solution, or with the right to arbitrate the differences which would possibly arise. This condemnation of the principle underlying the law was no surprise. The Pope could not but pronounce condemnation upon any Civil law presuming to affect the Church. He further gave notice in his mandate that what were called "practical" instructions were to follow. These would direct the conduct of the clergy in their new circumstances, which they could not avoid examining attentively. Three days later, Mgr. Merry del Val communicated to the Archbishop



of Paris a list of the questions which the assembled bishops were to examine at their meeting in the month of May. About the same time Mgr. Fulbert-Petit, of Besançon, made the remark that such an assembly of bishops was a favorable sign; compliance with the law might not be an impossibility.

The Commission on preparations for the meeting consisted of five archbishops, and two of the most distinguished bishops, men who welcomed the idea of making an experiment of the law's practical operation. The business transacted at the Plenary Assembly was at first kept secret. The following details, however, came out later. Each of the bishops on coming to his seat in the House found in front of him, in his place, the Fulbert-Petit proposal, as to the possibility of organizing new "Associations." He had also before him a confidential memorandum by Mgr. Fuzet, of Rouen, discussing the subject of worship Associations in Germany. An additional argument on that side of the question was a recent article by the archbishop of Paris loyally approving the new system of things contemplated by the law. Three subjects were voted on in the meeting: first, a complimentary address to the Pope (obviously *de rigueur* in the circumstances), which was passed with only two dissenting votes; secondly, it was decided by forty-eight against twenty-eight that it was expedient to try some *modus vivendi*; thirdly, fifty-six against eighteen adopted favorably the scheme of the archbishop of Besançon as to the possible organization of new "Associations." Notice too that in March of that same year the petition to the bishops had already appeared, called the Petition of the "Green Cardinals" (an allusion to the fact that several of the most distinguished signers were members of the *Institut de France*, whose official dress includes a coat with green embroidery), expressing a fear that civil war would ensue if the "Associations" were not

accepted. And still further, the public press, newspapers of the highest standing (like the *Journal des Débats* and the *Temps*) published some articles insisting that a representative lay element ought to be included, and take part in the administration of the Churches.

Put together the facts above named, and the conclusion is inevitable that at the time referred to, the entire body of enlightened pious and active Catholics were cordially in favor of endeavoring to comply with the new law, in spite of its imperfections. Especially is it noticeable that the great majority of the clergy were disposed to accept the new "Associations." But while the country was once more waiting in expectation of light from Rome, there came instead, in August of the same year, 1906, a thunderbolt, in the shape of the Encyclical "*Gravissimo*," which stunned even the foremost champions of the altar. This rejected the law, root and branch. It would accept no compromise whatever. It cut every cable, as it were, which connected "The Ship of Our Lady" with the now accursed shore of the French Republic. This document from Rome contained an extraordinary and almost inexplicable intimation that not only had the Vatican rejected the new law absolutely, but that the recently held Episcopal Assembly had done the same thing. Now what is the explanation of this strange piece of news? What was it that actually took place? The fact has come to public knowledge that the bishop of Orléans, Mgr. Touchet, one of the minority who voted against any compromise with the Government, had caused a statement to be sent to the Pope, to the effect that his own antagonism to the bill, however it might not be the attitude of the majority, was nevertheless the view which was actually held by the most influential bishops in France. It is also known that at that very time, Mgr. Fuzet, the author of the scheme which the bishops had approved, was denounced to His Holiness as a "moderate" by the Vice-Nuncio

Montagnini; and moreover, it is also known that at this juncture the dominant French influence at Rome was in the hands, not of the French Cardinals or French Clergy, but of a small group of mere politicians, of whom two among three were atheists, and who insisted on having the new law rejected. The thoughtful reader will ask himself, however, how do we know all this? What is the use of mixing up history with a lot of uncorroborated gossip? Our reply is: We have documentary proof in the papers which were seized at the Nuncio's quarters, when Montagnini was put out of office. These papers expose clearly this person's conversations and correspondence with the clerical leaders, and show us therefore the Catholic hierarchy checked and checkmated by the active interference of a set of people, who, with no papal warrant, assume the position of established masters of the bishops and other dignitaries of the Church, and boldly denounce them accordingly. We who are outside cannot comprehend how "the successor of Jesus Christ" could allow such men and such proceedings to be used in the interest of his cause. We believe this fact to be a weak point in the Catholic Church. A Jesuit Father frankly admitted, on the day after the Encyclical, the distrust, terror, and dismay of Catholic circles. If the Roman Curia desired to test the loyalty of the French clergy, certainly it has succeeded. Without protest, without a murmur, they have bowed the head to the gale, which has burst upon them. What is in their hearts, what are the secret thoughts of these accused bishops, as they find themselves doomed to be ignored for the future by the French government, while they are ruled by their own chief with a rod of iron, who shall say? Think of that poor Bishop Lecamus, formerly bearing to the second Plenary Episcopal Assembly, in September, 1906, the papal sanction of his proposal on the subject of diocesan administration, and then receiv-

ing, like a blow in the face, a telegraphic message sent from Rome, and read to him by the notorious Montagnini, cancelling that sanction. The blow struck home to the bishop's heart; he withdrew from the place and died. A certain Breton Cardinal received something like three thousand abusive letters, because he had ventured to make the remark that compromise with the law was not impossible.

During that same year, 1906, the public mind was excited to disorder and resistance almost everywhere, by the government's proceeding to make inventories of the properties of the Church. The agitation arose, not unnaturally, in this way: since the Churches were to revert to the State, and since the State for this reason had to make an exact statement of every detail which the sacred edifices contained, it was unavoidable that the civil power should set its detested foot even within the limits of the sanctuaries. This act, harmless in itself, but in the eyes of the more militant Catholics a symbol of worse to follow, was moreover just the kind of offense which would make an easy pretext for exciting unreasoning anger, and for instigating the people to defy the law. It is proved by the Montagnini papers that Merry del Val himself, understanding the situation, availed himself of the opportunity to spread public disorder. The doors of the Churches were barricaded. A few State officers, who of course were in no position to defend themselves, were drenched with water or otherwise treated roughly. Yet in all this there was nothing very tragic or even serious, any more than there could be said to be anything of real religion. The outside look of things, however, was sufficient to spread in Rome the idea that the French people was holding itself ready for mortal combat; whereas, on the contrary, at that very time it was desiring nothing more than what it always does desire, namely, peace. In several localities the

inventory proceedings brought to light a curious condition of mind among what we have to call the Catholics "*du nouveau style*." These people were more zealous than their curé, whose commands indeed they expressly disobeyed. The best known, though not the only example, was the Church of St. Clothilde in Paris. The parish priest protested in the most explicit manner: "If the curé is no longer master in his own Church, if the bishop is no longer master in his own diocese, if the Pope is no longer master in the Church Universal, there is an end to all respect for the hierarchy, there is an end to the principle of authority, which is the soul of the hierarchy, there is an end of Catholicism. If there exist a new species of Catholics who claim they have the right to overturn the traditional order, their extraordinary claim cannot be fought too strongly." How many bishops and parish priests have *thought* the same thing without being ready to say so!

In December, 1906, the Church not having accepted the new law, nothing remained but that the Episcopal palaces and ecclesiastical seminaries had to be evacuated, and temporary provision, however poor, made for the accommodation of the inmates. One eager effort after another was made first by the bishops, and later by members of the Parliament, to find a scheme of compromise. The second of the Bishops' Plenary Assemblies appointed three of its members to negotiate secretly with the government as to the possibility of creating "Associations" which should be both canonical and legal. Here and there, in spite of the Pope's prohibition, religious Associations actually arose. Well-disposed members of the laity took the initiative. Success, however, could not be reasonably expected. It was waste labor to work against the Pope; it was equally so to work without him. The movement too had a certain smell of schism about it, and naturally enough its attempts were followed by the condemnation of Rome.

In this melancholy year a humorous note was struck at Bordeaux by Cardinal Lecot, and by an Association which he had founded in that diocese. This Society had received the Pope's toleration. One fine day during a debate in the Chamber, the Minister, M. Briand, replied to a question of Jaurès, that Mgr. Lecot's Association was "in conformity both with the law of France and with the law of religion." This was doing an ill turn to the poor Cardinal, inasmuch as Rome had distinctly prohibited the creation of these institutions. Shocked and startled out of his wits, the good man sent a categorical denial. All the same, however, he had actually been guilty of forming, without knowing it, a "worship Association." On the strength of the toleration which the Pope had granted to Lecot, the bishop of Tarentaise solicited Rome's permission to set up in his Alpine diocese an Association like it, and received in reply an unqualified refusal.

There was a time when the Catholics feared that at the expiration of the term fixed by law (December, 1906) the government would deprive them of their churches, in which case they must have resorted to worship in private houses. But in October, 1906, the government made the announcement that the faithful would be allowed to continue the use of the church buildings, on condition of making some simple formal declaration. Rome, however, after hesitating a little, forbade the acceptance of this offer. In January, 1907, the government, still with the hope of alluring the Catholics into adopting a *modus vivendi*, passed an act permitting the Churches to form themselves into "Associations" of common law. Some days later Rome rejected the offer, saying that it aggravated the offensiveness of the previous proposition. In spite of these discouragements however, a third Plenary Assembly of the bishops was convoked with the same object as before—to discuss and

try to discover what would be their best course. After some vague and fruitless discussion, one of the prelates proposed that each parish priest should enter into a contract with his mayor, for the use of the church building. The assembled bishops accepted the proposition; and most surprising of all, the Pope, when he was consulted, did the same. But after the bill was drawn, his Holiness objected to a certain clause inserted by the government, prohibiting foreign monks from acting as parish priests on the ground that it was "vexatious." Thus the whole scheme of accommodation completely broke down once more, and the last chance vanished of an honest and equitable common understanding. The cause of the failure was mutual hatred and bitter feeling. This, whenever it reached a certain degree of irritation, converted each difficulty as it arose in the controversy into a fresh obstacle to reconciliation. So well was this state of things understood by the members of the government that after a while they ceased altogether making proposals of any kind. They felt that the mere fact of their offering a suggestion doomed it to rejection. This distrust on Rome's part can easily be understood. "*Timeo Danaos, et dona ferentes.*"

On the other hand, M. Briand was ready to welcome individual propositions which had the look of being helpful to the Church in its present desperate condition. Thus he was glad to accept the proposal made by the Abbé Lemire [the solitary priest among the deputies] whose tall form in the Chamber commanded the respect of the entire body, the Clericals alone excepted. The Abbé asked if the Mutual Benefit Societies, which the priests would form under common law, would receive from the State the funds which had formerly been in the hands of the Church for the benefit of the aged clergy. An amendment to this effect was passed. Thereby an amount of nineteen millions of francs out of the Church's

wealth might have been saved. M. Lemire expressed an additional wish that the same funds as before should continue to be employed in keeping up the masses for the benefit of the "pious Founders." M. Berger proposed the amendment in the Senate, and here also it was accepted.

The passage of this bill by the French Parliament was thus a very great benefit to the Catholics, not only morally but materially, since it preserved to them as much as a fifth part of the former ecclesiastical property—a capital of forty-eight millions of francs. Mgr. Fuzet forthwith hastened to Rome to point out how opportune, at this critical moment, the Mutual Benefit Act was, and on his return made this announcement to the Press. He said, "I limited myself when in Rome to putting the question, 'Will it be possible for the Ecclesiastical Benefit Societies to form themselves into acknowledged Associations?' To this the Holy Father answered, 'I give my consent.'" It was too good, however, to be true. Only a short time after, the Roman newspapers denied that any such authority had been given by the Pope, inasmuch as a merely oral approval was insufficient. In short, Rome rejected the Ecclesiastical Benefits proposal made by Mgr. Fuzet, as she had rejected all the rest. Presumably the Curia did not want to put itself under obligation either to M. Lemire, a republican, or to Mgr. Fuzet, who was a liberal; or else she was aiming to keep the French Clergy closely in her own grip. But it was a blow, and one that had the look of cruelty; since it struck both at the aged clergy, and also at the pious endowments bequeathed by the dead. All this was sacrificed. The only palliation was the papal announcement at the time, that "the departed Founders would have the benefit of two thousand masses, said on their behalf by the French monks in Rome."

What after all are the results to religion which have been produced by the Separation? They are not so



important as one might think. Looking at the Churches from the outside, nothing is changed. The priests continue saying mass in the same Churches as before. The faithful continue to attend more or less numerous, according to time and place. Here and there there is a country church abandoned, or another threatened by decay. All the world knows how hard Barrés labors, and what talent he displays in his effort to save these sacred walls (yet he is not a believer). Bishops' palaces are turned into libraries or museums, and seminaries have their quarters changed into barracks or colleges. This is the look of things upon the surface. The Separation has brought to light the wealth of some dioceses, and emphasized the poverty of others. If at Toulouse, Montauban, Lille, the archbishop has found a palace to live in, the archbishop of Tarentaise in the Alps is lodged like a pauper. The only bishop who continues to occupy his episcopal residence is the bishop of Rodez, and he does so by paying rent. But what is more serious is the falling off of funds in nearly all the dioceses, together with the scarcity of candidates for the ecclesiastical vocation. The bishop of Périgueux complains in 1910 that the subscriptions in his diocese are ridiculously small. Of the five hundred parishes in the diocese of Bayonne, only one-half pay the amount needed. Paris, Lyons, and Lille alone cover their expenses. Yet even here in Paris, the very richest parishes—St. Honoré d'Eylau, St. Philippe du Roule, the Madeleine—are like the rest in showing diminished receipts. The first announcement of Separation was defied by Catholic enthusiasm. This gradually failed, however, and the efforts of the people relaxed. At the same time, as an offset to these depressing results, in the great centres at least, the fact is undeniable that there is more practice of religion than there was before. The faithful have begun to feel that they owe a duty to their Churches. Persecution is

apt to re-kindle faith which long-continued ease had made lukewarm; or, to put it otherwise, the wind which blowing on the hearth scatters the ashes, revives at the same time the languishing sparks. So that the result of the Separation on the whole was a distinct revival of Catholic activity especially in the cities.

The bishops felt on their part they now enjoyed greater freedom. They no longer dreaded vexatious annoyances, or deprivation of their emoluments at the hands of the prefect, nor displacement from their office for a mere casual expression of irritation. But the liberty which they gained politically they soon found they were in danger of losing ecclesiastically. First, the Pope suppressed Plenary Episcopal Conventions. Curiously enough, it was a heretic, M. Paul Sabatier, a man very well informed as to Roman affairs, who on the 11th of August, 1907, was able to announce in the *London Times*, that the Plenary Conventions would for the future be discontinued, while the poor archbishop of Paris, one of the highest Catholic dignitaries in France, was actually making his preparations to hold the Conferences in December. This shows how little the Curia troubled itself about the French clergy. Three days later, on the third of December, this suppression was announced in the *Roman Corrispondenza* (the official paper). The country parts of France have certainly suffered from the Separation, whatever may be the case as to the cities. This was to be expected. A rural environment, with a regular life of patient toil, imparts a repose and balance of disposition, which through being habitual become men's second nature, and which, if destroyed by any cause, it is almost impossible to restore. The understanding had hitherto been that the government should pay on the people's behalf the salaries of the clergy, in return for their administration of baptism, confirmation, marriage, and burial. Now,

however, Catholics are told that for the future they themselves are to be responsible for the clergy's maintenance—an announcement which, at first, however it may be later, they refused to believe or to agree to. The country clergy, on their part, do not regret their new freedom from the dictation of superiors, nor the abandonment of the idea of creating religious "Associations." But where and how are they to get their bread? Already hundreds of their number have taken up different forms of secular work—stock-raising, bee-raising, farming, printing, and the like. Candidates for the sacred office, according to statistics published by M. de Narfon, have decreased in all the dioceses, sometimes by as much as one-half. Parents find that since the State no longer guarantees priests' salaries, livelihood by the sacred profession is too precarious. Even the bishops point out in their charges the life of persecution to which the clergy are subjected. How then can parents be expected to devote their sons to such a destiny?

"*Spies and a Reign of Terror.*" In his keen and striking book, *Le Bilan de la Séparation*, M. de Narfon gives the above heading to his final chapter; and in the course of it makes the remark that even at dinner-parties among the clergy, the guests, if tempted to talk freely about ecclesiastical affairs, keep a careful eye upon their company. At a clerical dinner-party, a *soutane* might conceal a Roman telltale more successfully than in certain salons the evening dress of a gentleman would conceal a professional police spy. Who would like to dedicate his son or his friend to spend his life in such an atmosphere? It is nothing less than stifling. No wonder that the candidates for the priesthood are few.

What we have been saying naturally suggests the subject of the Modernist movement in France. So far as the features of this are common to other Catholic countries, the reader may be referred to Paul Sabatier's enthusiastic,

too enthusiastic, *Les Modernistes*; and above all to a few chapters in Gaston Riou's recent book, *Aux Écoutes de la France qui vient*; where he sketches the disillusion he found when he came to close quarters with the Modernist *élite*. At this point, however, we should like to point out briefly the different currents of thought and feeling which are now stirring modern Catholic France.

The previous pages have shown the operation of a certain influence which has not only opposed the policy of the bishops but many times succeeded in reversing it. This influence is that of the monastic Congregations—as for example the “Assumptionists”; whose newspaper organ, *La Croix*, is sent to the very smallest villages, to the curé in his vicarage, to the proprietor in his château, and to every notorious bigot in the community. With regard to this paper I affirm distinctly, with sorrow and quite without ill-will, that the prevalent tone of its columns is violent and sometimes vulgar. Its insults and calumnies are as mordant and corrosive as a chemical acid and produce typical excitement. It stands as a religious herald, but it upholds religion even by violent means, and that is against true Christianity; and being read by the clergy everywhere, the result is that the future prospects of any unfortunate curé denounced by it as a liberal are blasted beyond repair. Another newspaper, *L'Action Française*, ably edited and addressed to the “Intellectuals,” is the organ of the more self-confident reactionists. They are clever in organizing public attacks against such as do not hold their narrow-minded patriotic views. They are royalists, and being such, though not necessarily personal believers, they pose as partisans of the Catholic Church; though not infrequently their newspaper contains what are nothing less than insults to the moral teaching of Christianity and to the person of Jesus Christ. Why the Church does not repudiate such allies is a mystery. On the other

hand, Marc Sangnier, a man of high moral character and unimpeachable orthodoxy, founded a League which he called "*Le Sillon*," and which some years ago counted among its members a considerable number of priests with a large band of enthusiastic young laymen. M. Sangnier himself is a man of exalted personal faith, which in his lectures he never attempts to disguise. What happened? The Pope dissolved the League, demanding the personal submission of M. Sangnier; who now, for fear of excommunication, can only conduct noiselessly his paper, *La Démocratie*. In 1908 two other orthodox periodicals, *La Vie Catholique* and *La Justice Sociale*, were suppressed by the Curia. Surely these unexplained proceedings compel us to suspect that their actual inner motive was hostility to the democratic republican spirit which these journals represented. Contrast with this conduct the treatment of the atheistical but royalist newspaper, *L'Action Française*, and we are driven to the conclusion that Rome regards the politics of her children as more important than their faith. Not that she is humanly illogical in doing so, since the government of the Republic is anti-clerical. All the same, this is a dangerous attitude. When the Church identifies herself with any political party, she lowers her sacred dignity in the eyes of her own children, and still more in the opinion of those who are inimical or indifferent to religion. Becoming thus identified, she rises and falls with the party's vicissitudes of fortune; she shares its occasional contempt; she lessens, if not forfeits, her authority over souls; she puts herself on a level, in the eyes of her own servants of whatever rank, with the low quarrels of political elections and the cackle of the political press. An earthly government which denies the existence of a God may descend as low as it likes without being illogical. But surely the institution which represents Jesus Christ in the world has not the moral

right to be equally vile. It is the terrible misfortune of Catholic Christianity in France that the religious enthusiasm and the ardor of its best children not only are of no use to them under present conditions, but may be said, on the contrary, to cause their ruin, whenever their relations with the Vatican are not perfect and their opinions are not identical with the pronouncements of the Curia. Shocking is the state of things when a moderate writer like Paul Sabatier, who is in sympathy with Catholicism, has to pronounce upon its present character the following fatal criticism: "The Curia issues its commands. These commands are obeyed. But alas! the obedience of such true Catholics as honestly mean to serve God and not to make use of Him for their own service, is despondent and discouraged, and they feel even scandalized."

## PART SECOND: THE PROTESTANTS

The Protestant world has been less excited by the law of Separation than the Catholic. In spite of the new burdens which it imposes, in spite even of the divisions among them which the change was ready to introduce, Protestants, taken as a whole (leaving out the Lutherans, who were often partisans of the Concordat, being more "ecclesiastically" minded than the "Reformed") have for a long time been calling for the order of things which the present new law brings with it. Long ago the Protestant current fell apart into two streams of tendency, which, though they differed greatly in point of doctrine, were very similar, strangely enough, in their modes of worship and their moral life. The recent removal of the embracing bond of the Concordat resulted, not in uniting these two currents, but in driving them more obviously apart. It soon appeared that a united General Assembly of all the Reformed was im-

possible. The orthodox would have none of it. Doubtless they had their reasons. There was a group of "Moderates," whose peculiar combination of fervor in religious and social affairs with championship of liberty in theological opinion gave a moment's hope that reconciliation might be brought about; even though some of their leaders, Wilfred Monod, Gounelle, and others, were handicapped as peacemakers by their recent notorious abandonment of the Orthodox Synod precisely on the question of the new Protestant organization. However that may be, in October, 1906, the moderates summoned all the Churches in France to send representatives to an Assembly to be held in Jarnac (Charente). Very few orthodox attended. The Assembly itself was only saved from failure—but it *was* saved—by the lofty eloquence of Charles Wagner, who at the critical instant was powerful enough to inspire and fill men's hearts to the full with the spirit of peace and union. Then and there a Society was founded, which, "outside of and above party considerations," was to unite together all Churches which were disposed to prefer religious to ecclesiastical unity. This seemed encouraging. Soon however the fact came out, in spite of the desire of the "Founders," that against their intentions they had actually created a third group of Churches, intermediate between the "orthodox" and the "liberals." This new bent was probably the inward thought of most of the Protestants. But many of the laity saw in this proceeding a step in the direction of rationalism—the *bête noire* of those familiar with the story of Scherer and Colani. Besides this, the Churches of the "orthodox" tendency having made prudent preparations, the shock of the Separation found them duly organized and equipped for the consequences. This consideration greatly influenced the decision of many of the Churches when the time came to decide to what

party they should attach themselves. How could they be rash enough to throw in their lot with a vague "Association of Jarnac," which possibly the next day might be non-existent! How could they separate themselves from their traditional root, the Reformed Evangelical Church, which assured them of their future! I should hesitate to assert this in writing, if it were not that I have it directly from the lips of pastors, whose Churches actually stuck to the orthodox ranks. Optimists might encourage the hope that the orthodox would gradually go over to the moderates. Nothing of the sort happened for this reason: in consequence of a request from many of the liberals to be allowed to join the moderates, moderates and liberals have been steadily drawing together, until last year they came to the point of fusion with each other. Notice too, that now for some time many of the liberal Churches, awaking out of their lethargic isolation, have been welcoming with joy the hand reached out to them by a number of the old orthodox at Jarnac, while the third or moderate party is finding its glory in having had faith enough to mingle, without fear of being lost, among brethren holding different views. Still further, the mentality of a purely orthodox mind is so different from that of a liberal, that one can scarcely blame the former for refusing to coalesce with the latter. Rather, the characters deserving censure seem to us to be those who, while really heterodox in their opinions, have nevertheless joined themselves to the orthodox for no better reason than in order to profit by their organization, and there are not a few who belong to this class. There are many Protestants who think of God as better pleased with a superficial belief in an extensive range of doctrines, whereas our goal is profound devotion and real self-denial.

As was the case with the Catholics, the Separation sorely tried the generosity of the Protestants also. In



1905 their budget had been calculated by Professor Raoul Allier as two million, four hundred and sixty thousand francs. Today it amounts to more than three million, one hundred thousand. It is a surprising fact in the history of French Protestants that since the Separation their good works, their religious enterprises have continued to increase in number (instead of diminishing) in proportion to their budget of expenses. It is fair to say, however, that some of the Societies find more difficulty than formerly in collecting the amount necessary to make ends meet. M. Allier notices the fact. It is mostly in towns that the people are in the habit of giving. The country parts, even where the peasantry are well off, scarcely give at all. The city spends, the country economizes. There are deeper reasons, however, in the present instance. Many of the Protestant pastors shocked by the withdrawal of State support left their Churches to seek their livelihood otherwise. The only advantage of this action of theirs was in the case of certain localities, where the decline of Protestant population no longer justified their being severally kept up. At the same time, while reviewing the general condition of the Protestant Churches resulting from the new law, it is astonishing that in this time of pressure several pastors of diverse denominations are supported in some of the larger southern villages where, to all appearances, one would be quite sufficient. In most regions, indeed, as the Department of Les Hautes Alpes, religion suffers cruelly for the want of pastors. Yet it is all the more cheering to see in other quarters that the supply of the ministry, seriously embarrassed as it has been for some years, is actually at the present moment encouragingly on the advance. One remarkable phenomenon in French Protestantism is worth noticing. Philanthropic enterprises are more prosperous than the Churches. While the Churches seem to be in almost as low a state as they

were a few years ago, or at best are having fluctuating success according to the spiritual power of their leaders, a host of charitable movements, especially medical, have become enormously popular with the faithful. What is still more extraordinary, the great efforts for Christian evangelization both in and out of France, while they are not without the support and sympathy of religious people, are being conducted, not by but without the direct instrumentality of the constituted Churches. In a word, the Church, as if stricken with a kind of paralysis, is no longer, as formerly, the inspirer and leader of benevolence, but benevolence or charity has become the director and leader of the Church. The fault is with the very ideal of the Church, more conservative than active. A mark of this spirit may be found in the unintelligent manner in which the faithful choose their pastors. Sometimes they do so without really knowing the candidate; sometimes again they select him for his ecclesiastical opinion's undisturbing affinity to their own; still more frequently perhaps for his agreeable relations to his official predecessor, with no other view than to keep peace in the house; while, on the contrary, philanthropic work demands a different order of recommendation altogether, namely, definite ability to carry it on.

Let us quote an example. So far as the young are concerned, while the Church has remained nearly as incapable as ever, the Christian Associations have done an amazing work in collecting and benefiting members of both sexes. It is truly remarkable to see how directly these Associations bring high moral and spiritual influence to bear on modest groups of "students" and of young people in the Christian Lyceums, so as not infrequently to furnish as pastors for the Churches capable young men whose help the Church itself had besought in vain. Most Paris Churches, however, are progressing on that line.

The Protestant press is not very flourishing. The journal *Foi et Vie* is the only one which, animated with a Protestant spirit, represents modern thought and ideas. Its circulation is announced as having doubled. A building, as an audience-hall for the purpose of lectures, is on the point of being erected. The courses given in the former quarters have proved a great success. *La Revue Chrétienne*, of somewhat more modest dimensions, frequently contains solid contributions from the pen of distinguished Protestant writers.

Let us now come to a general conclusion. There are many of the French people who have become weary of the free thought, as shallow as it is cold, which has prevailed among us for twenty or thirty years. Taine's intellectualism, Renan's dilettantism, no longer hold undisputed sway. Part of the present generation honestly desires, nay, it is truer to say, thirsts with a passionate thirst to know the whole truth of things, God included, if indeed there be a God. On the other hand, there is a general feeling that we need, each one of us, to lay upon our life some rule for its guidance; we need to have a frame of regulated conditions within which to pass our existence; we need some kind of discipline for its training. Popular teaching itself, though the born enemy of the Church, agrees with the rest of the world in these opinions. Indeed, as a literary task it would be deeply interesting to trace the approach of this new Spring, this gradual new Springtide, which is now beginning to blossom in the human mind. We are using the phrase "spiritual tide" in its widest and worthiest sense when we affirm that at this moment it is conspicuously on the rise in the best French minds. It is not the Church which has called forth this movement. Rather she has fought it by attacking Modernism, which is one of its forms. Nevertheless, she intends using this actual upheaval to her advantage, and often succeeds in

directing the rise of these new streams of life into the channel she has formed of strictly legal methods. Too frequently however, she diverts it to political purposes, even to electoral uses. There is the Bishop of Orleans, Mgr. Touchet, the very man who sent a memorial of protest to the Pope, after the first Plenary Assembly; have we not seen him, within the last few months, make the proposition that the Catholics should abandon their schools, and throw in their disposable funds to the treasury of the electoral campaign? This sort of thing is done too often. The Church, whose solitary use and function is to spiritualize, or give of the spirit to the world, is found to be actually doing the reverse and materializing the world's spirit. These things are a pain to us. We are not among those who desire the Church's death. On the contrary, we wish it may live. But while it lives, we crave for it the rectitude of conduct and the spirituality of purpose which alone give her the right to live.

A book has recently appeared under the title *Ce qu'on a fait de l'Église*, by five anonymous priests, who seriously, sadly, and even with tears, have drawn up an indictment against their sacred Mother. We could wish from our heart that such a book were impossible; and now here it is. And Rome will suffer from it, even while declaring its condemnation. As regards Protestants, their Churches suffer from intestine strife and doctrinal disagreements. Even extreme evangelicals do not avoid these difficulties. Some fifty years ago, complains one of the most venerated orthodox pastors of our time, orthodox on one side and liberals on the other fought each other squarely in the face, each of them expressing themselves in the terms of their most extreme views. But let this dear man regret these old days; we do not. Actually the intellectual positions taken up lie scattered along between the extremes. A change has come over us which it is useless to blame. Faith is not less keen, though it is

more enlightened. A new impulse, a craving for progress, are the features of the day. We must not fear then for our faith, but rejoice for it. The honor of any Church is always to be looking forward, without pride yet without fear, thankful for the spiritual treasures it has gathered in the past, and confident that it will surely develop in the future, if it keeps alive the glorious spirit of its Master.